

AM 13, 1980

## AN ACHAEMENID SYMBOL

### II. FARNAH »(GOD GIVEN) FORTUNE« SYMBOLISED\*

(Taf. 28, 2; 29)

To Professor Sir Harold Bailey  
for his invaluable Iranian studies

#### *Aims and methods*

In the first part of this study<sup>1</sup> arguments were advanced against the traditional interpretations of the Achaemenid winged symbol (a winged circle often with a human bust emerging from it): an identification with *Fravahr* (basically, the soul) is incompatible with the motif's patterns of occurrence; likewise, the generally accepted opinion that the figure represents Ahuramazda is based on a mistaken surmise of A. H. Layard who, unable to identify the winged symbol in Assyrian contexts, flatly assumed that its Iranian successor depicted Ahuramazda, and the Assyrian prototype must have therefore manifested the god Assur. Subsequent scholars took Layard's fantasy seriously, ignoring, among other facts, that Ahuramazda, the Supreme God of Zoroastrians, was later figured in Iranian art as a Mazdaean priest holding the barsom bundle, and since the Achaemenid symbol lacks this essential attribute it cannot represent that deity<sup>2</sup>.

The conclusions reached in the earlier article are slowly gaining favour<sup>3</sup>, and the time has now come to offer an interpretation of the Achaemenid winged symbol by examining its patterns of occurrence and its various connotations as well as by tracing

\* This article owes its origin to an essay I wrote for Professor R. N. Frye in 1970, when I had the honour of working with him at the Asia Institute in Shiraz (Iran); I wish to express my affectionate gratitude to him for his constructive criticism and valuable advice from which I have benefited throughout these years. I am likewise beholden to Professor P. Calmeyer for important references and helpful discussions.

<sup>1</sup> »An Achaemenid Symbol I. A farewell to »Fravahr« and »Ahuramazda«, AMI N.F. 7, 1974, 136-44.

<sup>2</sup> P. R. S. Moorey (Iran 16, 1978, 147) upheld the old view without meeting my objections. [For criticism of his interpretation see now P. Calmeyer, »Fortuna — Tyche — Khvarnah«, Jdl 94, 1979, 347-65 esp. 357 n. 25], and Elias Bickerman (Athenaeum N.F. 66, 1978, 239 ff., esp. 244 n. 25) hoped to dismiss all my arguments by noting that »Ἀγάλμα in Herodotus (I, 131) means »idol« and not »image«! He has forgotten that he himself uses »images« instead of »idols« in JEL 65, 1946, 263: »In order to suppress a captured city, the victorious enemy carried away its divine images«!

<sup>3</sup> P. Calmeyer, in: Proceedings of the IIIrd Annual Symposium on Archaeological Research in Iran, Tehran 1974 (1975) 233-42; E. Porada, The Art Bulletin, 58, 4, 1976, 612; A. B. Tilia Studies and Restorations at Persepolis and Other Sites of Fars II (Rome 1978) 32 n. 2; J. M. Balcer, Iranica Antiqua (1977) 13, 1978, 129 and J. Wieshöfer, Der Aufstand Gaumātas und die Anfänge Darius' I. Boan 1978, 137 n. 3.

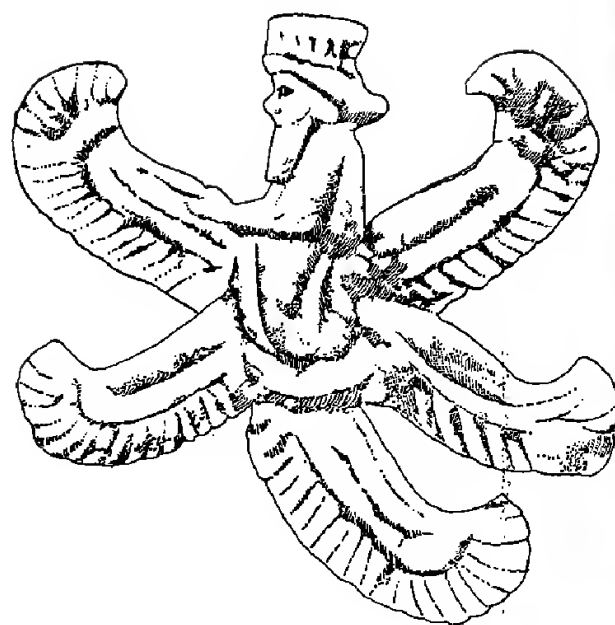


Fig. 1. Ornamental object of chased gold, discovered at Sardis; height 1 1/8 inches. Istanbul, Archaeological Museum (drawn by G. Tilia from a photo reproduced by Ghirshman, see n. 20).

its substitutes in the Hellenistic and Sasanian periods where religious or mundane motifs are more readily explainable<sup>4</sup>. It can be shown that the Iranians had borrowed the forms of the winged symbol from their subjects to depict their ancient concept of

<sup>4</sup> Brief studies on this topic were already available by this writer: Cyrus the Great (Shiraz 1970: 340-45; Persepolis Illustrated; Institute of Achaemenid Research Publications IV (Tehran 1976: 30-31 with pl. 30).

*Farnah* »(God given) Fortune« (Avestan *Xvərənah*; Pahlavi *Xwarrəh*; New Persian *Xurrah*, *Farrah* and *Far*)<sup>5</sup>. It will also be revealed that of the two major variations of the symbol, the winged human figure was employed to typify the »Kingly Fortune« (Avestan *Kavāem Xvərənah*; New Persian *Farrah-e Kayān*), while the winged circle was used to depict the »Fortune of Iranians« (Avestan *Airyānem Xvərənah*; New Persian *Farr-e Irāni*)<sup>6</sup>.

### 1. Patterns of occurrence

Wherever its provenance and whatever its original significance, the winged symbol appears in Achaemenid art in two major variations which evidently had distinct connotations<sup>7</sup>. The winged circle is associated with ordinary Iranians, such as satraps<sup>8</sup>, soldiers<sup>9</sup>, priests<sup>10</sup>, and hunters<sup>11</sup>, as well as with ordinary animals<sup>12</sup> and supernatural beings<sup>13</sup>. In a number of cases this form of the symbol hovers above royal personages<sup>14</sup> or a group of Iranians amongst whom princes may also be present<sup>15</sup>; the kingly figures in such cases are meant to represent highest ranking Iranian individuals (see below). The winged human figure, on the other hand, is connected with kingship: it hovers above kings and princes in a gesture of protection, holds the ring of sovereignty and

<sup>5</sup> The standard study of *Farnah* is by W. H. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth Century Books* (Oxford 1943) 1-77 (brought up to date with a new introduction i-xlix).

<sup>6</sup> A third *Farnah* was that of Zoroaster (Bailey op. cit. 30 ff.); but this falls outside the scope of the present article.

<sup>7</sup> Shabbazi, *AMI N.F.* 7, 1974, 142.

<sup>8</sup> As on the coin of Datames 378-72 B. C. (G. K. Jenkins, *Ancient Greek Coins* (London 1972) 135 with fig. 327); on the coin of another Cilician satrap, c. 400 B. C. (C. M. Kraay, *Greek Coins* (London 1966) pl. 194 no. 673) and on the coins of some Cypriot dynasts who as satraps of the Great Kings ruled in the fifth century B. C. (G. F. Hill, *BMC Cyprus*, London 1904, 38 with pl. VII no. 13 and p. 40 with pl. VIII no. 1).

<sup>9</sup> Examples are frequent on seals, see e. g., G. Perrot and Ch. Chipiez, *History of Arts in Ancient Persia* (London 1892) fig. 226 and A. U. Pope (ed.), *A Survey of Persian Art*, (1938) VII pl. 123 E; pl. 124 A. X.

<sup>10</sup> As on some seal-impressions from the Treasury of Persepolis, see E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis II* (Chicago 1957) 9-10 with pl. 7.

<sup>11</sup> As on the scene carved on the upper end of the famous gold scabbard of the Oxus Treasure (O. M. Dalton, *The Treasure of the Oxus*, London 3rd ed. 1964, 9 with pl. IX c) and on an Achaemenid seal from Ur (L. Legrain, *Ur Excavations, X: Cylinder Seals*, London 1951, 50 with pl. 40 no. 759).

<sup>12</sup> Examples in J. Boardman, *Greek Gems and Finger-rings* (London 1970) illustr. 831 (above a fine stallion), 908 (above a charging lion and a fox) and 833 (above a dog or lynx).

<sup>13</sup> Six symbols supporting double-beaded ram capitals ornament a silver bowl from a Persian tomb at Usak (Lydia) see *AJA* 71, 1967, 172; a bicorporate sphinx sitting under the symbol is engraved on a chalcidony scaraboid, see Boardman, op. cit. no. 836; and two sphinxes flanking a man emerging from a moon crescent sit under the symbol, see *Survey*<sup>8</sup> VII pl. 123 K.

<sup>14</sup> As on a stele from Suez which shows Darius and Xerxes under the symbol's wings, see most recently Calmeyer, *AMI N.F.* 9, 1976, 63 ff. esp. 83 with fig. 6; see further the seal published in *Survey*<sup>8</sup> VII pl. 123 M.

<sup>15</sup> As on the royal audience of the »Treasury Reliefs« which originally ornamented the central façade of the Apadana stairways, see G. Tilia's reconstruction in Shabbazi, *Persepolis Illustrated* fig. 10; also above the Great King and his so-called throne-bearers, see Schmidt, *Persepolis I* (Chicago 1953) pls. 79, 99 and 105.

resembles the royal personage(s) above whom it floats<sup>16</sup>; otherwise, it bears a special relationship with the direct statements of a king<sup>17</sup>. In exceptional cases, the motif is not associated with a kingly figure, but it appears on the behalf of the royalty<sup>18</sup>, safeguarding or encouraging loyal subjects in their defence of the empire, or being protected by Persian soldiers whose prime task it was to guard the kings and monarchy<sup>19</sup>. In some instances the symbol is figured alone, or is given the form of an object with decorative or amulative function (Fig. 1)<sup>20</sup>. Of these representations, the latter deserve separate examination.

One notable representation of the winged symbol is found engraved on an Achaemenid cylinder seal (Fig. 2). The subject shows two »Persian« soldiers facing each other, holding their spears upright with both hands so that their butts rest on the king's feet; they flank the bust of a king emerging from a circle to which are attached the wings; above the whole scene hovers a winged circle. Here we clearly have two symbols: a winged human, which is being protected by »Persian« soldiers (his identification with Ahuramazda is thus out of place), and a winged circle, which safeguards the soldiers as well as the former symbol. This representation can be compared with the »Audience« of Artaxerxes I sculptured on the door-jambs of the Hundred Column Hall in Persepolis, which shows the Great King amongst his officials protected by »Persian« soldiers standing on either side while winged circles hover above the scene<sup>21</sup>. The comparison once more reveals the association of the winged human figure with Iranian royalty: it had the features, costume and position as well as the vulnerability of the Great King; both were venerable and yet both needed protection.

Another important representation of the winged symbol ornaments a pair of Achaemenid ear-rings, one of which belongs to the Norbert Schimmel Collection<sup>22</sup>, and the other, said to have come from Mesopotamia, is in the Boston Fine Art Museum<sup>23</sup>. The

<sup>16</sup> On the tomb of Darius the Great, the king and his royal fire stand under the wings of a symbol, the human bust of which is unmistakably Darius himself. Also, in Persepolitan sculptured reliefs, the human figure issuing from the ring is in each case identical both in physical features and attire with the Great King above whom it hovers, see Schmidt, *Persepolis I* pls. 75-9 and 104, 107.

<sup>17</sup> As on the façade of the western stairway of the Palace of Xerxes (the *Hadiš*) in Persepolis (Schmidt *ibid.* pl. 160), and above the Old Persian inscription of Artaxerxes III carved on the western stairway of the Palace of Darius (the *Tachara*) (Schmidt *ibid.* pl. 153 B).

<sup>18</sup> As on the coin of Tiribazus, the Persian satrap of Lydia (c. 380 B.C.), see G. F. Hill, *BMC Lydia, Ionia, and Cilicia* (London 1900) pl. XXVI no. 2; XXXIX no. 1.

<sup>19</sup> On the cylinder seals published in *Survey* VII pl. 123 D; 124 X.

<sup>20</sup> See the ornamental object found in Sardis, R. Ghirshman, *Persia from the Earliest Times to Alexander the Great* (London 1962) fig. 522.

<sup>21</sup> Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, 133 f.; pls. 96-99; Shahbazi 15, 60 ff.; 68 ff.

<sup>22</sup> O. W. Muscarella in his edition of *Ancient Art: The Norbert Schimmel Collection* (Mainz 1971) no. 156.

<sup>23</sup> W. Kelly Simpson, *The American Connoisseur*, Feb. 1972, with fig. 8; J. F. X. McKeon, »Achaemenian cloisonné-inlay jewelry: an important new example«, *Orient and Occident: Essays Presented to Cyrus H. Gordon on the Occasion of his sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. by H. A. Hoffner, Jr. (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1973) 109-119 with pl. I.



Fig. 2. Design on a cylinder seal (British Museum); drawn by G. Tilia from a picture in Pope (ed.) *Survey VII*, pl. 123 (see n. 9).

centre of each ear-ring is occupied by the figure of a king with four wings, who issues from a crescent of the moon, holding a flower with the one hand and extending the other in the gesture of benediction. A band decorated with triangles encircles the figure. On either side of him, in perfect symmetry, are set three identical crescent symbols. In each cradle and facing the central figure is the bust of a man in smaller scale issuing from the lunar lower part; each man wears a tall «Persian» fluted hat and a fairly long beard, and holds a flower in the one hand while extending the other hand towards the central figure in the gesture of adoration (Fig. 3).

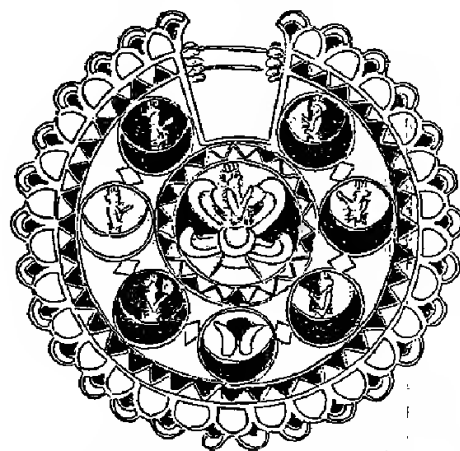


Fig. 3. Royal Fortune flanked by six bust symbolizing six great nobles of Persia; design of an ear-ring in the Boston Fine Art Museum (see n. 23), after P. Amiet in *Acta Iranica* 1, 1974, Pl. II.

exceptional beauty and fine workmanship of these pieces of jewellery suggest that they were made for a princely individual. The meaning of the motif ornamenting them therefore, must have been of considerable significance. One inevitably recalls the Zoroastrian idea of the Supreme God, Ahuramazda, flanked by His six helpers, the «Holy Immortals» (*Ameša.spentās*) (Fig. 4). But this interpretation is impossible, for three of these Holy Immortals were imagined as female divinities<sup>24</sup>, whereas here we have

<sup>24</sup> These were Spenta.armaiti, Haurvatāt and Amərətāt; the other three, Vohū.manah, Aša.vahis and Xšaθra.vairiya, were imagined as male divinities.

all male figures around a main symbol. The explanation of the scene ornamenting the ear-rings is provided by a comparison with that sculptured on the upper façade of the tomb of Darius the Great<sup>25</sup> (Fig. 4 a). The latter shows a central figure, here Darius himself, and standing on either side of him in the same arrangement that we saw on the ear-rings, are three male attendants depicted in smaller scale. Two of these are named: Gaubraya (Gobryas) and Aspačana (Aspathines); the first was one of the six helpers of Darius in his overthrow of Gaumata the Magian (Pseudo-Smerdis)<sup>26</sup>, and the second had by 500 B.C. come to be counted as one of them also<sup>27</sup>. It hardly admits of a doubt,

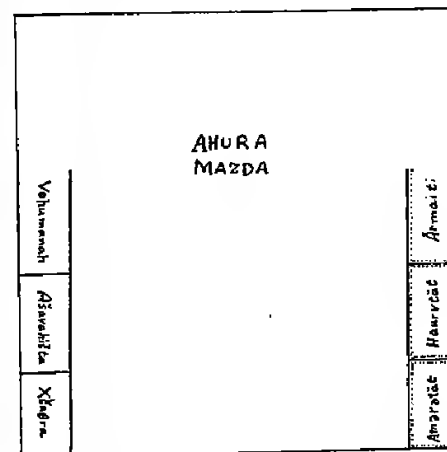


Fig. 4. The order of the Amēša-spēntās and their relation to Ahuramazda (based on the Greater Bundahisn XXVI, 4).

therefore, that the scene on the tomb shows Darius and his six helpers who were to him what the Holy Immortals were to Ahuramazda<sup>28</sup>, and is a conscious attempt at demonstrating the Great King's Zoroastrianism<sup>29</sup>. As the scenes depicted on the tomb and the

<sup>25</sup> Schmidt, *Persepolis III* (Chicago 1970) 81 ff. with pls. 19.

<sup>26</sup> Darius, Behistun (Old Persian) inscription, col. IV 1. 80 ff.; Herodotus III 70.

<sup>27</sup> Herodotus VII 97.

<sup>28</sup> Shahbazi, *Persepolis Illustrated* 73.

<sup>29</sup> I. Scheftelowitz, *Die altpersische Religion und das Judentum* (Gießen 1920) 133 n. 4, came close to recognising this point when he suggested that the heptad of Amēša-spēntās was formed by analogy with the Seven Princes attending upon the king of Persia (with Herodotus III 31 etc.).

ear-rings are essentially alike, their meanings must have also been very close, and analogy suggests that the winged human figure in the centre of the ear-rings related to the Great King and was a manifestation of his kingship, while the smaller attendants on either side represent the King's helpers, the heads of the six great families of Persia<sup>30</sup>.

## II. Prerequisites of interpretation

Our inquiry into the patterns of occurrence of the winged human figure in Achaemenid contexts readily shows that this motif requires an explanation that fantasies as »Ahuramazda's symbol« can in no way produce. Indeed, any serious attempt at deciphering the meaning of the symbol must satisfy a number of conditions related to its connotation, namely, that it must have been meant to represent a heavenly concept hypostatized into a divinity who:

- a) Was directly associated with each Iranian king in a very personal way;
- b) Had a particular relation with the falcon, manifested in its outstretched falcon wings;
- c) Wore royal insignia, especially the crown;
- d) Needed the protection of Iranian soldiers, and
- e) Despite its importance in Achaemenid time, later Iranian dynasties, who claimed descent from the Achaemenids or tried to revive their traditions, found it impossible to do without it by giving its place to other symbols.

## III. Interpretation: Farnah

If we turn to ancient Iranian traditions we find only one idea which satisfies the conditions of our inquiry admirably fitting the description of the symbol discussed above. This was the concept of *hoarnah*, the good fortune divinely bestowed<sup>31</sup>, and hypostatized into an independent divinity, *Farnah*<sup>32</sup>. This heavenly being was given a place in the dwelling of Ahuramazda (*asar.rōšnib* »the endless light«), and appears in the visible world *gēūg* in physical form<sup>33</sup>. It could likewise be taken away<sup>34</sup>, or leave a person who died<sup>35</sup> or proved unworthy of it through falsehood and destructive

<sup>30</sup> The fact that the smaller attendants wear royal-type head-gears presents no problem: Plutarch (Praec. Reip. Ger. c. 27; Moralia 820) claims that the descendants of Darius' Helpers had the right to wear the up-right tiara.

<sup>31</sup> Already in 1928, I. Taraporewala thought that »this winged-figure represents the *Kavān* or the Royal Glory of ancient Iran ...«. His statement was based on a dubious argument: »the human figure in the centre of the disk is copied from the figure of Assur on Assyrian standards, where it also typified the might of Assyria«, see The Journal of the Cama Oriental Institute 2, 1928, 16 n. 1; 25 n. 21. The Assyrian prototype does not represent Assur, and the analogy is wrong altogether.

<sup>32</sup> Bailey? 2 ff.; new intr. xvi ff.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 22.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 20-21, 49.

<sup>35</sup> Firdawsi, *Šāhnāmah* (Brüxlm ed. Tehran 1934-36) I 273 (on the death of Nawšār); VII 200 (on the death of Bahrām III) etc.

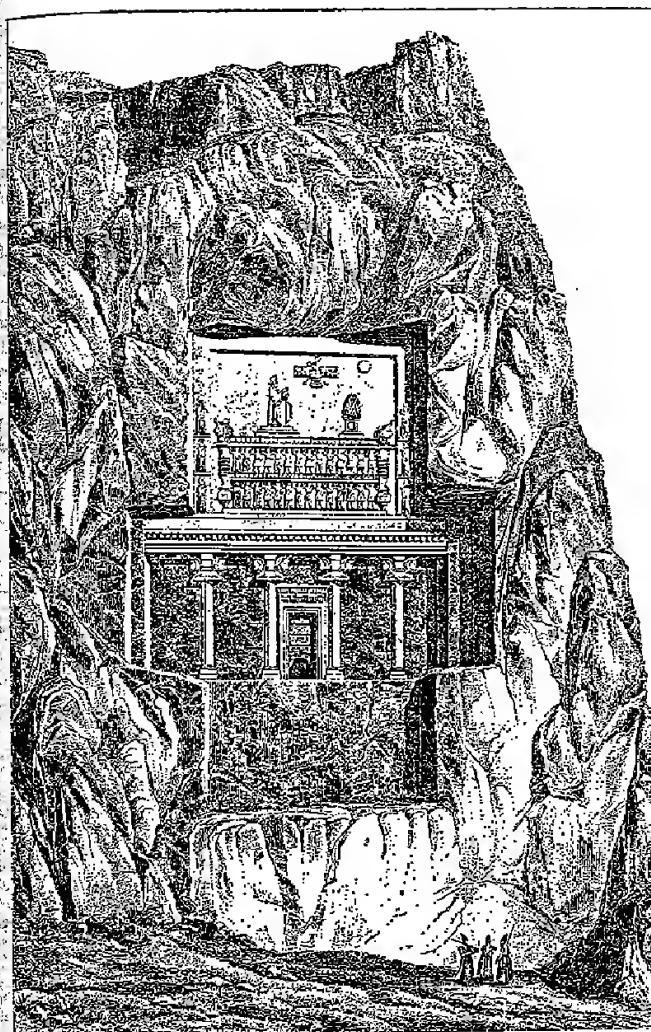


Fig. 4 a. Tomb of Darius the Great at Naqsh-e Rostam.

activity<sup>36</sup>. When it leaves one or escapes a would-be-usurper, it moves fast, and usually the faster creatures on earth and in the sky (such as a stag or a falcon) to be regarded as the personification of *Farnah*<sup>37</sup>.

Essentially, two hypostases of *Farnah* were conceived: a national Iranian (Avestan *Airyānem Xʷarənah*; Pahlavi *Xʷarrah-i ērānšahr*; New Persian *Farr-e* and a royal form (Avestan *Kavaem Xʷarənah*; Pahlavi *Kayān Xʷarrah*; New Persian *Farr-e Kayāni*). The Iranian *Farnah* was a Mazda-created divine force which belonged to Iranians, to those who are horn as well as to those who are to be born<sup>38</sup>. «It smites the Evil and his emissaries, vanquished the foes of Iran, and bestowed wisdom, wealth and welfare upon worthy Iranians»<sup>39</sup>. Even great heroes and kings of Iran could not achieve their feats without the aid of the Iranian *Farnah*<sup>40</sup>. Later the notion evolved that every creature was thought to have its own *Farnah*<sup>41</sup>, and even beasts and objects acquired those of their own<sup>42</sup>. The Royal *Farnah* was the pre-requisite of kingship and accompanied only rightful Iranian kings, and gave them a certain character through which they achieved their victories and obtained good fortune. This *Farnah* was inaccessible (*a-xʷarəndm*) to any who was not of the lineage of the Iranian king. An illustrious sovereign possessed an illustrious *Farnah*<sup>43</sup>, and this he could transfer to a chosen heir. From later traditions we know that this conferring was effected by a king placing his own crown upon the head of the appointed prince<sup>44</sup>. We also hear that the recipient of the *Farnah*/crown of an illustrious monarch could actually resemble him

<sup>36</sup> Leaving Jamšid (Yast XIX 34-38); Kay-Uš (Dinkard IX 22, 7-12); and Xosrow II (Šāhnāmā VIII p. 2908 n. 7).

<sup>37</sup> Bird in Yast XIX 34 and ram in *Karnāmah-e Ardašīr* (Bailey<sup>4</sup> 30).

<sup>38</sup> Yast XVIII 1-8; XIX 56, 59 ff., with Bailey<sup>4</sup> 27.

<sup>39</sup> Yast XVIII 1-2; Bailey<sup>4</sup> 25 and references there cited.

<sup>40</sup> *Karnāmah-e Ardašīr* cited by Bailey<sup>4</sup> 48.

<sup>41</sup> Bailey, *ibid.* 41.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 12, 17, 18, 28, 29, 41, 42, 43, 44, 65; cf. Firdawsī, *Šāhnāmā* I 208 on the *Farnah* of a beautiful tree.

<sup>43</sup> Yast XIX 9 ff.; Bailey<sup>4</sup> 44 quoting *Dinkard* and 46 quoting the Greater Bundahišn.

<sup>44</sup> Bailey<sup>4</sup> 48. Jamšid was the possessor of the most illustrious *Farnah*; Yasna IX 4 and *Šāhnāmā* III 704; VII 2267. Subsequent rulers were said to have received a portion of Jamšid's *Farnah*, see Yast XIX 35 ff.; 71-2, 93; *Šāhnāmā* I 279; III 671; VI 1670 etc.

<sup>45</sup> *Ayūkāt-e Jāmāsp* (ed. and tr. G. Messina, Rome 1939), p. 44 f. relates: «Three sons were born to Frētōn: Salm, Tōz and Ērīč were their names. He called all three together to say them: «I will divide the entire world between you; let each of you tell me what seems good to him so that I may give it to him». Salm asked great riches (*vas-hērt*), Tōz for valour (*tahikih*), and Ērīč, who had the Royal Glory (*Xʷarrah-i Kayān*) upon him, for law and religion (*dād ā din*). Frētōn said: «May what each of you has asked come him. To Salm he gave the land of Rome down to the Sea Coast; to Tōz he gave Turan down to the Sea Coast; and the Empire of Iranians (*Erānšahr*) and India, down to the Sea, fell to Ērīč. ... Frētōn lifted the crown from his head and put it on the head of Ērīč, saying: «My Divine Fortune (*Xʷarrah*) is established on the head of Ērīč until the morning of the Renovation of all living world; O honoured one, may the royalty and sovereignty over the children of Tōz and Salm belong to your children.»

in appearance and physical prowess as well<sup>46</sup>. In exceptional cases, an overlord was regarded upon as the symbol of the *Farnah* of a lesser king<sup>47</sup>.

That the Achaemenids knew of the concept of *Farnah* and held it in exceptional esteem can readily be established. Although the term appears in an Old Persian text only as a part of a proper name (*Vi-da. Farnah*, see the Appendix), its notion is well expressed in royal proclamations which always stressed that the Great King ruled by the favour of Ahuramazda (*vašnā Abūramazdāh*)<sup>48</sup>. Many proper names compounded with *Farnah*, which like those with Miθra/Missa, Arta, Ahura, etc., belong to the category of theophoric names, clearly attest the importance of *Farnah* for the Iranians of the Achaemenid time (see the Appendix). The concept was known to certain classical authors as well. The Greeks rendered *Farnah* mostly as *τύχη*, but sometimes as *δαιμόνιον*, while Latin sources translated it as *Fortuna*, etc. This is well shown by a phrase in Isaiah (LXV, II).

«You dress a table of Fortune», where the Aramaic *gdb*, which usually stands for Greek *Tyche* (as in Genesis, XXX, II), is rendered by the Septuaginta version by *το δαιμόνιον* while the Vulgate translates it as *Fortuna*<sup>49</sup>. Hence, the *δαιμόνιον παροῶν* which in the time of Darius III had turned ill because of Alexander's victorious invasion<sup>50</sup>, is synonymous with the *Tyche* of Persians for the restoration of which the same Persian king prays:

«O Ye gods of my race and kingdom, above all things else grant that I may leave τὴν Πεσοῶν Τύχην re-established in the prosperity wherein I found it»<sup>51</sup>.

Coming from the same source and relating to the same context, both terms plainly translate the Avestan *Airyānem Xʷarənah* »Fortune of Iranians«. The Greeks rendered

<sup>46</sup> *Šāhnāmā* III 671 relates of Kay Xosrow who possessed Frētōn's *Farnah*:

«In his *Farnah*, appearance, hands and feet,

He is, one may say, the hero Frētōn reliving.»

Also Ardašīr-e Pāpakān resembled his Kayānid namesake, Bahman Ardašīr, from whom he claimed inheritance (VII, 1926), and Šāpūr I and Hormazd I resembled Ardašīr (VII, 1970, 1977), etc.

<sup>47</sup> Thus, Tiridates of Armenia approached the Imperial throne and paid homage to Nero, and then the Emperor placed the diadem upon the prince's head and declared him King of Armenia. Tiridates acknowledged Nero's overlordship, and said:

«I have come to thee, my lord, to worship thee as I do Mithras. The destiny thou spinnest for me shall be mine; for thou art my Fortune (*τύχη* = *Farnah*) and my Fate (*μοίρα* = *baxti*).»

See Dio Cassius LXII 5.

<sup>48</sup> For instance, Darius says in his Behistun (Old Persian) inscription, col. I, l. 11 ff.: *vašnā abūramazdāh adam xišayaθiya aθmy. abūramazdām xišasam manā frābara* »by the grace of Ahuramazda I am king; Ahuramazda bestowed the kingdom upon me«. This is a regular formula with the Achaemenid kings. Also Darius says (Susa f, 15 ff.): »Unto Ahuramazda thus was the desire: he chose me as (his) king in all the earth; he made me king in all the earth. I worshipped Ahuramazda. Ahuramazda bore me aid. What was by me commanded to do, that he made successful for me. What I did, all by the favour of Ahuramazda I did. Again, Xerxes, although not the eldest son of Darius, was elected king because »thus willed Ahuramazda« (Persepolis f, 28 ff.). Other examples can readily be quoted.

<sup>49</sup> E. Wilhelm, »Hvarenō«, in Sir James J. Jejeebhoy Madressa Jubilee Volume (Bombay 1914),

119-66 esp. 166.

<sup>50</sup> Plutarch, Alexander XXX 3, 4.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 12.

the other term, *Kavaem Xv'rdnah* «Kingly Fortune» as Royal Daimon or Tyche, noted that it was revered by the Persians as a heavenly concept of the living. Thus, Plutarch reports (on the authority of Ctesias) that in c. 400 B. C., a high ranking official of Artaxerxes II prevented banqueting guests from developing their bickering into a quarrel by stating:

«Let us eat and drink now, revering the βασιλέως δαίμονα<sup>52</sup>.» Similarly, Theopomp of Chios (born c. 370 B. C.) related that Nicostratus of Argus went to the court of Artaxerxes III, won his favour and participated in his expedition of Egypt in 351, that in order to observe all Persian court protocol:

«Every day, as often as he began dinner, he would set a special table, not only for the δαίμονι τοῦ βασιλέως, heaping it with food and all other necessities, since he heard that this is what the Persians did who spent their time at court and because he thought that by this obsequiousness he should gain more material rewards from the King<sup>53</sup>.»

The Royal Daimon referred to in these accounts clearly belonged to living king (hence, they should not be confused with the *Fravahr*, which generally was understood as the soul), and well expressed the idea of Kingly Fortune of the Iranian tradition. Further, Strabo testifies (Geography XII 3, 31) that, the «Royal Oath» taken by Iranian kings of Cappadocia, the Pharnacids, began with: «By Τύχην βασιλέως...» and this must have been an ancient Persian tradition, for the Pharnacids claimed Achaemenid descent<sup>54</sup> and the oath «By the Fortune of the King of Kings» continued to be sworn by the subjects of the Sasanian emperors (see below).

Now, with so significant a position which the Farnah enjoyed in Achaemenid belief on the one hand, and the care which the Persians took in lavishing their iconography by representing their royalty and its various manifestations<sup>55</sup>, on the other hand, would have been unnatural had they not depicted the Royal Farnah in some form, and no more suitable a form could have they chosen than the glamorous and graceful winged human symbol which was already widely popular and well respected in ancient Near East. Both the Royal Farnah and the winged human figure reveal — in the Persian traditions, the other in the Persian art — the same character: benevolent, venerable and protective and yet itself in need of protection; their identification is therefore, most reasonable.

#### IV. Supportive arguments

The interpretation of the winged human symbol as the Royal Farnah is supported by a number of indications. Firstly, the symbol was closely associated with the «Per-

<sup>52</sup> Plutarch, Artaxerxes XV, 5.

<sup>53</sup> Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae VI 252 b.

<sup>54</sup> Diod., XXXI, 19.

<sup>55</sup> On this see the pertinent remarks of P. Calmeyer *apud* A. Sh. Shahbazi in *Gymnasium* 86 (1979) 493.

sonal Fire» of each king, which from Sasanian analogies we know to have been regarded as one of the sources of the Royal Farnah. Secondly, the Achaemenid Farnah was syncretised with the Hellenistic Tyche which itself subsequently came to be one of the representations of the Iranian divinity Farnah, even in the sphere of art and iconography. Thirdly, the Royal Farnah of Iranian kings were manifest in their crowns and garments, and since the symbol wears the same attributes, it must itself have been meant to represent the Farnah of the kings above whom it hovers. Fourthly, the sovereignty and hence the Royal Farnah of an Achaemenid king was typified as an eagle or eagle-king, which shapes correspond to that of the human winged figure. Finally, a Sasanian substitute of the Achaemenid symbol was a winged ram, which form is known to have personified the Royal Farnah. Let us now consider these points in some detail.



Fig. 5. Design on the reverse of a coin of Autophradates, Persian dynast (3rd—2nd Centuries B. C.); drawn from a picture in Ghirshman, *Iran: Parthians and Sasanians* (1962) illustr. 129.

#### 1. Farnah and «Personal Fire»

Iconographically, the most important Achaemenid depiction is a scene ornamenting the upper façade of the tomb of Darius the Great (Fig. 4 a) and copied on those of his successors. It shows the Great King standing to the left upon a three-stepped dais, holding a bow in the left hand and extending his right hand in the attitude of adoration towards the flames burning upon an altar which likewise rests on a three-stepped base; a winged man wearing the costume of the standing king (*Taf.* 28, 2) hovers above him and his fire. Few centuries later, the trio recurs on the reverse of coins of some Persian dynasts, the local heirs of the Achaemenids<sup>56</sup>; here the symbol floats directly above the fire burning in altars placed upon the roof of a small sanctuary on the left side of which stands the dynast who issued the coin, in the act of adoration (Fig. 5). The Sasanians modified this theme: on reverse of their coins they depicted a fire altar flanked by two

<sup>56</sup> A. Sh. Shahbazi, *AMI N.F.* 10, 1977, 199.



attendants, one of whom is meant to represent the king who figures on the obverse sometimes above the altar and within the flames they placed the bust, which R. Göbl has proved<sup>57</sup>, symbolises the same king who struck the coin (in a few cases the king within the flames and the one depicted on the obverse wear identical crowns, Fig. 6).

This developed Sasanian representation provides the clue for the interpretation of the subject as a whole: the fire was the »personal royal fire« of the king who stands before it<sup>58</sup>, and as the symbol of his kingship<sup>59</sup>, it was kindled at his accession and kept burning as long as he reigned<sup>60</sup>. The Achaemenids regarded their



Fig. 6. Design on two coins of the Sasanian King Vahran V; drawn by G. Tilia from a picture in Göbl (see n. 57).

0 1 2 3 cm.

<sup>57</sup> Sasanian Numismatics (Braunschweig 1971) 19.

<sup>58</sup> This is proved by the legend accompanying the fire altar on the reverse of the Sasanian coins: the early ones have the Aramaic *NWR' ZY... MLK'N MLK*; and from Šāpūr II on the inscription in Middle Persian: *'wōr y... šāhān šāh*; both mean »The Fire of... the King of Kings«. After Yazdgerd II, the legend does not occur.

<sup>59</sup> The royal fire of a king was called »the king of fires«, and the founding of it was on the coronation of the monarch and commenced his own era, so that his regnal years were counted from that occasion and the length of his rule equalled the life of his »Personal fire«. Thus an inscription of Šāpūr I from Bīšāpūr records:

»In the month of Farvardin of the year LVIII [of the fire of Pāpāk?], XL years of the fire of Ardašīr, XXIV years of the fire of Šāpūr, (that which is) the king of fires.«

For references and discussion see A. Christensen, *Revue des arts asiatiques* 10, 1937, 127 (which is a note to R. Ghirshman's article, pp. 123–29).

<sup>60</sup> That was already an Achaemenid custom, see Diodorus Siculus XVII 114.

auspicious and holy that they carried it on a silver altar in sacrifice processions<sup>61</sup> or military expeditions<sup>62</sup>, addressed prayers towards it<sup>63</sup>, and swore oaths by it<sup>64</sup>. The importance of the »personal fire« for the Great Kings was due to the association of the fire with Farnah, which our sources clearly establish. The Avesta speaks of *Adur*, the divinity of fire, as one of the sources of the Kingly Fortune<sup>65</sup>, and the Greater Bundahīn describes the three great fires of the Iranians as »like three *X'arrah* in three fire vessels«<sup>66</sup>. On the coins of the Iranian kings of Kushan, the deity Farnah



Fig. 7. ΦΑΡΡΟ as represented on Kushan coins, after E. Herzfeld (see n. 2 fig. 1).

(written ΦΑΡΡΟ or ΦΑΡΟ) (Fig. 7) is represented as a male figure with flames issuing from his shoulders and a bowl of fire in his outstretched hand<sup>67</sup>. Other sources point to the same association<sup>68</sup>.

These indications suggest that the »king« within the flames on the reverse of some Sasanian coins was the Kingly Fortune of the Great King who appears on the obverse (Fig. 6). By analogy, the »winged king« which almost emerges from the altars on the sanctuary of the Persis dynasts must depict their Kingly Fortune, plainly

<sup>61</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* VIII 3, 11.

<sup>62</sup> Quintus Curtius III 3, 9.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. IV 13, 12.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. IV 14, 24.

<sup>65</sup> *Yāst* XIX 46–50.

<sup>66</sup> Cited and translated by Bailey<sup>6</sup> 45.

<sup>67</sup> J. M. Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans* (Los Angeles 1967) 96, 198 ff.

<sup>68</sup> Before Zoroaster's birth, his Farnah (which belonged to Jamšīd's family; *Yāst* XIX 79 ff.) appeared »in likeness of a fire from the endless light«, Bailey<sup>6</sup> 30–33 with quotations from *Dinkard* and *Vīdāhikā* of Zātspram.



modeled after Achaemenid prototypes<sup>69</sup> (Fig. 3). By the same token, the »winged figure« hovering above an Achaemenid monarch and his fire and wearing his regalia, may safely be taken as the symbol of his Kingly Fortune. On the other hand, when the adoration of Adūr does not involve a king, the winged symbol quite naturally leaves the royal bust, and is merely a winged circle (see Fig. 8).

Conversely, when two royal individuals are revering Adūr, both wear the crown and costume which are shared also by a winged human symbol hovering above (see Fig. 9).



Fig. 8. Adoration of Adūr, deity of fire, by a priest; from a seal impression discovered at Persepolis (see n. 10, pl. 7); drawn by G. Tilia.



Fig. 9. Two royal individuals in adoration before Adūr, on a cylinder seal in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; drawn from a picture in Ghirshman (see n. 20 illus. 330).

## 2. Farnah synthesised with Tyche

The interrelations of nations brought about a certain syncretism of their religious ideas, and often allowed the worship of the same deity by various peoples under different names. Amongst the early instances of such parallelism, one was the equation (despite grammatical gender) of the Iranian Farnah with the Greek Tyche<sup>70</sup>, on the one hand<sup>71</sup>, and with the Semitic GDH »Fortune«<sup>72</sup> on the other hand. Thus Tyche is rendered in the Aramaic as GDH, while this latter in Zoroastrian texts stands as the ideogram of the Iranian Xvarrah. Similarly, the Kāvaem Xvarrah, »Kingly Fortune«

<sup>69</sup> Note that the headgear of the winged figure on Persis coins is the »spiked« crown of the Achaemenid period whereas the Persis dynast represented in front of the fire altar and also on the obverse of the coins wears the *bāšlyk*.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Bailey<sup>6</sup> 39; new intr. xvi-xvii.

<sup>71</sup> On *tyche* see C. Herzog — Hauser in Pauly — Wissowa (ed.), RE, XIV (1948), 1662 ff. s.v. Tyche.

<sup>72</sup> F. Cumont, Textes et monuments figures relatifs aux mystères de Mithra, I (1896) 284 ff. and also in RE, VII 1 (1910) 433-35; Bailey, *ibid.*, 39 ff., new intr. xvii.

of the Sasanian kings is translated in the vocabulary of the Aramaic speaking Syrians as *gdh mlt mlt* »Fortune of the King of Kings«<sup>73</sup>, while the »Royal Oath« taken by the Pharnaces of Cappadocia, who were proud of their Achaemenid descent, is rendered as »By the royal Tyche and the Moongod of Pharnaces«<sup>74</sup>. Still earlier, a Greek inscription from Mylasa (Caria) dated to the reign of Artaxerxes II, speaks of the gods Zeus (Ahuramazda), Heracles (*Vr̥θōra na*) and the royal Tyche (*Kāvaem Xvarrah*)<sup>75</sup>, while a source used by Plutarch translates the *Airyānem Xvarrah* »Fortune of Iranians« as the Tyche of the Persians<sup>76</sup>.

The equation of Farnah/Tyche/GDH was natural enough, for the three deities hypothesised the same idea, namely, the good fortune divinely bestowed upon an individual and special to him and appearing in all aspects of his life, and the three were invoked as powerful, wise and noble gods, and were worshipped as patron deities of distinct persons and the source of their welfare and achievements. Now, in Post-Alexander periods the Greek Tyche (or a divinity similar to her, such as Nike<sup>77</sup>) assumed the position and function which in Achaemenid contexts belonged to the human winged symbol, appearing above Iranian princes and bestowing the attribute of royalty (a wreath or diadem<sup>78</sup> upon them)<sup>79</sup>. This means that the Achaemenid winged human figure and Tyche both represented the same divinity, namely, the Farnah »Fortune«, and it explains why in Post-Achaemenid period we seldom meet the winged figure so popular in earlier times.

Similarly, Isaac of Antioch (5th Century A. D.) states that people anciently placed tables and spices upon roofs and venerated the deity *Gdh*<sup>80</sup>. Now, this god is already mentioned in Isaiah (LXV 11), which dates from the Achaemenid period, and his equation with Farnah is well established. Indeed, the worship of *gdh* became popular before the return of the exiles<sup>81</sup>. It follows, therefore, that the adoration of Farnah also was performed upon roofs and involved tables heaped with food and other necessities.

<sup>73</sup> References in Bailey<sup>6</sup> 40.

<sup>74</sup> Strabo, Geography XII 3, 31.

<sup>75</sup> CIG, 2693 b with E. Herzfeld, Zoroaster and his world, I (Princeton 1947) 179; II 494 ff.; 878.

<sup>76</sup> Alexander XXX, 12 with Bailey, *loc. cit.*

<sup>77</sup> R. Ghirshman, Iran: Parthians and Sasanians (London 1962) figs. 196-98. — Cf. Calmeyer, Jd 3, 94; 1976, 348 f. Abb. 2: Nike and Tyche.

<sup>78</sup> Already on the coin of Tribazus (above, n. 18) the winged figure carries a wreath instead of a ring. Half a century later, Alexander is depicted on a decadrachm (the so-called Alexander Medallion, for which see B. Kaiser in JdI 77, 1962, 227 ff.; Jenkins, Ancient Greek Coins (1972), 204.217 with fig. 105) and above him hovers the Victory carrying a wreath. Tyche is frequently portrayed on Parthian coins as bestowing victory upon Iranian kings (see E. Herzfeld, Iran in the Ancient East (London 1941) 295 with fig. 388); she was, moreover, depicted on a rock-relief at Behistun which celebrates the triumph of Mithridates the Great, see Ghirshman, *ibid.* fig. 67.

<sup>79</sup> So already M. Dieulafoy, L'Acropole de Suse (Paris 1890) 406-408; M. I. Rostovtzeff, Yale Classical Studies 5, 1935, 157-304 esp. 175; Rosenfield<sup>69</sup>, 198-99.

<sup>80</sup> Edited by J. Bickell II 210, cited by F. Cumont, RE, VII 1, 435. I owe the reference to Professor P. Calmeyer.

<sup>81</sup> R. W. Moss in J. Hasting's Encycl. of Religions and Ethics, VI (1914), 88-90.

This was indeed the case. Firstly, the story of Nicostratus of Argus at the court of Artaxerxes III (cited above, n. 56), proves that the veneration of the Kingly Fortune required tables of food and other offerings. Secondly, on the façade of the tomb of Darius the Great and on those of his successors, where one expects iconographical references to the religious beliefs of the eventual occupants, a sculptured scene depicting the building (representing the Palace of Darius, the *Tafara*, in Persepolis<sup>82</sup>) on the roof of which stand representatives of subject nations carrying on their raised hands the imperial throne (*gāōšm*) which supports the Great King and his fire while above all hovers the winged human symbol (Fig. 4 a). This ritual scene admirably corresponds with the adoration of the god *Gdh/Farnah* in ancient times as described by Isaac of Antioch.

These parallelisms suggest that the Achaemenid winged human figure personified the Farnah of the King of Kings, and was identified with *Gdh* and by Tyche/Daimon.

### 3. Royal attributes related the symbol to the Royal Farnah

The Achaemenid winged human figure wears the royal head-gear and garment of the particular king above whom it hovers. Notable examples of such representation occur on the tomb of Darius the Great (Fig. 4 a), on the door jambs of the Hundred Column Hall of Artaxerxes I at Persepolis (Taf. 29.1), and on the jambs of the southern and northern doorways of the Central Palace (Tripylon), also completed by Artaxerxes I<sup>83</sup>. When two identical royal individuals are shown in one scene, as on the »Treasury Reliefs«<sup>84</sup> and on the jambs of the eastern doorway of the Central Palace, they shared a single symbol.

Now, the wearing of the crown and royal robe was the prerogative of the Great King and his heir to the throne<sup>85</sup>. Each ruler's crown<sup>86</sup> was a manifestation of his Farnah<sup>87</sup>, and this relationship is well known from later periods<sup>88</sup>, and is specifically mentioned in the Iranian national epic<sup>89</sup>, which derived from much older sources,

<sup>82</sup> So Schmidt, Persepolis III, 81.

<sup>83</sup> Calmeyer, AMI, N.F. 9, 1976 71-6; Shabazi, Persepolis Illustrated 61, 62.

<sup>84</sup> On which see A. B. Tilia<sup>85</sup>, 191 ff.; R. N. Frye, JNES, 33 (1974), 383 ff.; A. Sh. Shabazi, AMI N.F. 9 1976, 151-56.

<sup>85</sup> For a good discussion of the case see S. K. Eddy, The King is Dead: Studies in the Near Eastern resistance to Hellenism 334 to 31 B. C. (Lincoln 1961) 44 ff.; on the equation with the crown prince Calmeyer, AMI N.F. 9, 1976, 69 ff.

<sup>86</sup> See von Gall, AMI N.F. 7, 1974, 145-61 esp. 151-56; Calmeyer, AMI N.F. 9 1976, 45-63 esp. 51 ff.

<sup>87</sup> Von Gall, op. cit. 145 ff. with reference to Quintus Curtius (X 10, 13) who says of Alexander: diadem: ... *et capiti adiecta fortunae eius [Alexander] insignia*.

<sup>88</sup> For the significance of the crown in the Sasanian period see especially E. Herzfeld, AMI 9, 1938 101-138; K. Erdmann, Ars Islamica 15/16, 1951, 122 ff.; R. Göbl<sup>89</sup> 7 ff.

<sup>89</sup> Firdawsī, *Shāhnāmah* VIII 2112 describes the coronation of ancient Iranian kings as follows (my translation):

»Thus was the tradition of the noble kings:  
When a monarch, of the august race, was new,  
Unto his presence went the highest priest (*mobad-e mobādan*).

well as in an important Zoroastrian text<sup>90</sup>. The royal garment too, was a manifestation of the Royal Farnah. An Achaemenid law required every king to wear on his accession to the throne the garment of Cyrus the Great (which was treasured in Pasargadae)<sup>91</sup>, and when Darius III saw his enemy, Alexander, in a dream »in the garb in which he himself had been made king«, the seers predicted that the Macedonian was fated to seize the rule of Asia<sup>92</sup>. The significance of the royal head-gear and garment as signs of Farnah is well illustrated by a tale set in third century Sogdiana, where Achaemenid traditions left clear traces. A »Caesar« was tricked into the belief that he was dead; then he was laid in a coffin inside a chamber tomb. Some thieves entered his tomb and one of them »placed the diadem of majesty on his head and put on royal garment«. He approached the coffin where the Caesar was lying, and spoke thus to him: »Hey, Hey, Caesar, awake, awake! Fear not, I am your Farnah (*prn*)!« The Caesar accepted the impersonator's claim: »Ah my lord ... be you my helper ...«<sup>93</sup>.

The importance of these royal attributes as the manifestations of Farnah explains why the Achaemenids guarded such regalia with extreme care and punished with death anyone who dared to wear them<sup>94</sup>. It also shows that Alexander wore the »Median dress« of the Persian kings<sup>95</sup> to convince the Iranians that he possessed the insignia of their own ruler<sup>96</sup>. When, therefore, a winged man is pictured wearing the crown and robe of a particular king and hovering above him in the gesture of protection, the reasonable interpretation is to see in him the symbol of the Kingly Fortune of that king.

### 4. »Eagle-king« related to Vārðyna, the bird of Farnah

The Achaemenid winged human symbol consists of the bust of a king and the body of an eagle or a similar bird, and it is no mere co-incidence that the Iranian concept of royalty has profound connexions with the king of the birds. A story was told that Achaemenes, the eponym of the Persian kings, was nursed by an eagle<sup>97</sup>. A golden

Taking along with him three enlightened of wise men.

He himself sat the king upon the throne,

Blessing that royal seat,

He brought forth to him a crown of gold (*tā-e zar*),

From which (*kaz-ā*) he (i. e., the king) received high position (*burz*) and Fortune (*far*),

Then he placed a royal head-cover (*kolāh-e kay-i*) on his head,

(And) with great joy kissed him lightly.

Afterwards, every one who presented tokens of gifts,

All that the king bestowed upon the poor ...»

<sup>90</sup> *Āyāthār-e Jāmāsp*, quoted above, n. 45.

<sup>91</sup> Plutarch, Artaxerxes, 3.

<sup>92</sup> Quintus Curtius III 3, 4.

<sup>93</sup> W. B. Henning, »Sogdian tales«, BSOAS 11, 1943-46, 465-85 esp. 477-79.

<sup>94</sup> On the garment: Herodotus IX 108 ff. and Plutarch, Artaxerxes 5; on the crown: Plutarch, ibid.,

26 and Arrian, Anabasis VI 29, 3.

<sup>95</sup> Ephippus of Olynthos apud Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae XII 537 D-E.

<sup>96</sup> So Eddy, The King is Dead 45-46.

<sup>97</sup> Aelian, On the characteristics of animals, XII, 21.

eagle with outstretched wings was the sign of the imperial banner of the Achaemenids. An eagle personified the Iranian king in the dream of Queen Atossa, mother of Xerxes<sup>99</sup>, and Cyrus the Great is referred to in the book of Ezekiel (XVII, 13) as »Eagle of the East«. The Persis dynasts who claimed Achaemenid descent, also had eagle on their banner<sup>100</sup>, as did the Parthians and Sasanians<sup>101</sup>. An eagle (*ālūh*) personified one form of the Kingly Fortune for Ardašīr, the founder of the Sasanian empire<sup>102</sup>, and, in another story, spread its wings above the same king to portend his rise to the Persian throne<sup>103</sup>.

The reason for this popularity is found in the religious and national traditions of the Iranians. In the Avesta the Kingly Fortune assumes several forms, one of which is a bird named *Vārōyāna*<sup>104</sup> »the falcon«<sup>105</sup>; it appears »with wings unfolded (*prama*)«<sup>106</sup> and is associated with Vərəθraγna (Bahram), the god of Iranians in arms, and this deity himself is the »bestower of Farnah«<sup>107</sup>. *Vārōyāna* is the same bird which adorns the crown of the Sasanian king Bahram II<sup>108</sup>; the same as the »white falcon (*bāz-e sapīd*)« which according to the *Šāhnāmah* portends kingship for an Iranian prince<sup>109</sup>; and the same as the eagle which was so popular with the Achaemenids. Later times, *Vārōyāna*, the falcon, assumed a mythical character, being represented as eagle-dragon, and was given the name *Saena murya* »falcon bird«, which subsequently developed to *Semury*. The wings and feathers of *Semury* carried Farnah<sup>110</sup>. Another substitute for *Vārōyāna* was *Humāy*<sup>111</sup>, the auspicious bird which spread its wings over a kingdom or person to make the recipient fortunate<sup>112</sup>.

<sup>99</sup> Xenophon, *Anabasis*, I, 10: 12; *Cyropaedia*, VII, 1: 4; Q. Curtius, III, 3: 16.

<sup>100</sup> Aeschylus, *Persae*, 205 ff. with explanation by Ph. Keiper, *Die Perser des Aeschylus als Quelle für altpersische Altertumskunde* ... etc., Erlangen (1877), 13.

<sup>101</sup> This will be discussed in a forthcoming article on the iconography of the coins of Persis dynasts.

<sup>102</sup> F. Andreas, *Klio* 3, 1903, 353 ff.

<sup>103</sup> *Kārnāmā-e Ardašīr* XIV 12.

<sup>104</sup> Moses of Chorene, *Historiae armeniacae*, cited by Th. Nöldeke, *Das Iranische Nationalepos* (Leipzig 1920) sect. 4.

<sup>105</sup> *Yašt* XIV 19–21; 34–8.

<sup>106</sup> *Bailey*<sup>8</sup> 24 with references, and more recently B. H. Stricker, *Vārōyāna*, the falcon, *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 7, 1963–64, 310–17.

<sup>107</sup> *Yašt* XIV 35.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid* 41 with *Bailey*<sup>8</sup> 14.

<sup>109</sup> In this king's name the allusion to Vərəθraγna (Bahram) and his bird, Vārōyāna, is perfectly clear.

<sup>110</sup> Firdawsi, *Šāhnāmāh* I 290 ff. with A. Sh. Shahbazi, *Cyrus the Great* [in Persian] (Shiraz 1970) 343–44.

<sup>111</sup> On Farnah carried by Vārōyāna's feathers see *Yašt* XIV, 35–38; on *Saena* see *ibid.* 41; *Yašt* XII 17 with Ch. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, 1348. On Farnah-bestowing *Saena* (*Semury*), see *Šāhnāmāh* I 138, 139, 223; VI 1704.

<sup>112</sup> On *Humāy* as the sign of royal banner of Iran, see *Šāhnāmāh* II 509; VI 1544; VIII 2481.

<sup>113</sup> On the Farnah-bestowing *Humāy* see *Marzbān-e Ruzm* (fl. 10th century A.D.), *Marzbān-nāmāh*, cited and explained by M. Mo'in, *Mazdayasnā va adbiyāt-e Pārsi* (Tehran 1959) 427–28; see further Mohamamad b. Mahmūd b. Ahmad-e Tusi, *ʿAlāʾib al-mazlūjāt va garāʾib al-mowjūdāt*, ed. by M. Soufideh (Tehran 1966) 516–17, and Abūbakr ... al-yazdi (fl. 12th Century), *Farrā-nāmāh*, ed. I. Afšār (Tehran 1346/1967), 99: »Humāy is an auspicious bird, and people believe its shadow is most

Apart from their own traditions, the Iranians had come to know that their eminently cultured subjects in Egypt regarded the falcon as a manifestation of sovereignty<sup>113</sup>. They had likewise learnt that in Assyria the winged human figure hovering above Assyrian kings and trees symbolised the »Sun of all people«, which was one of the qualities of Assyrian monarchs regularly mentioned in their titles<sup>114</sup>. When, therefore, the Iranians borrowed the forms of the symbol from their subjects, they re-interpreted it to represent their own concept of divinely bestowed grace and kingship. That the Achaemenids regarded a winged king as the symbol of the Royal Farnah is evident from a story related by Herodotus<sup>115</sup>. On the eve of his battle with the Massagatae, Cyrus the Great saw in his sleep a vision of Darius, the eldest son of his own cousin Hystaspes, who was then scarce twenty years old and had remained in Persis. Prince Darius, who was far removed from the succession, appeared to Cyrus »with wings upon his shoulders, shadowing with the one Asia and Europe with the other«. The dream meant »that Cyrus' kingdom was to fall at last upon Darius«, and since Cyrus had two sons and naturally expected his own line to continue reigning, he interpreted the winged image of Darius as a sign of the Prince's plot against himself, and intended to question him closely.

Later on, Farnah is explicitly associated with wings, and both terms are used in contexts relating to kingship synonymously<sup>116</sup>.

### 5. Winged ram substituting winged man

In Post-Achaemenid Iran, the winged symbol was gradually replaced by a number of motifs, one of which was a ram's head and neck emerging from a pair of outstretched wings<sup>117</sup> (Fig. 10). The connexion with royalty is proved by a diadem with long flowing ribbons which is tied around the neck of the ram, and the interpretation is substantiated by evidence from Sasanian sources. According to the *Kārnāmā-e Ardašīr*, this king's Royal Farnah appeared as a ram of exceptional size and beauty<sup>118</sup>. More explicitly, the source used by Firdawsi describes Ardašīr's Kingly Fortune as having

august, and say that whoever came under the shadow of this bird is certain to attain sovereignty, and this is well believed ...». The poet Manūčehri (11th century) eulogized his king as follows:

»O Sire! In sovereignty the *Farr* of Humāy is with you,

Until the world exists, your empire will endure.«

<sup>113</sup> Stricker, in *Indo-Iranian Journal* 7, 1963–64, 310 ff.

<sup>114</sup> See now Calmeyer, *JdI* 94, 1979, 357 f. 360 f. n. 25 f. 35.

<sup>115</sup> Herodotus I 204.

<sup>116</sup> *Šāhnāmāh* VII 1935 relates that when Ardašīr V inquired as to the meaning of a stag (in the *Kārnāmāh* a *varrak* »ram«) which accompanied the fleeing Ardašīr, he was told: »that is his Fortune (*far*) and is his wing (*par*) to lead him to sovereignty and happy destiny«; again, Hormazd IV tells people on his accession: »We will keep the world (in prosperity) under our wing (*par*) in the same way as did our father keep it under his law and Fortune (*far*)«, *ibid.*, VIII, 2567. More instances in I 139; III 730; V 1993; VIII 2516–319 and IX 2807.

<sup>117</sup> See e.g., Sasanian silver. The University of Michigan Museum of Art Publication (1967) 68, 70 (cf. the curious example in fig. 67).

<sup>118</sup> Cited by *Bailey*<sup>8</sup> 30.

assumed the form of a beautiful stag (*yarm*) of purple colour with the wings of a falcon bird (*Semury*)<sup>119</sup>. This proves that the winged and diadem ram in Sasanian coins and texts personified the Kingly Fortune<sup>120</sup>, and since it was a substitute of the Achaemenid winged man, the latter also must have depicted the same concept in the earlier period.



Fig. 10. Winged ram symbolizing Royal Fortune, after a picture in Sasanian silver (see n. 117).

#### V. Winged Circle symbolising Iranian Farnah

Thus far the Royal Fortune. The other hypostasis of Farnah was the national form *Airyānem XVardnah* «Fortune of Iranians». It belonged to all Iranians, bestowed welfare, wealth and wisdom upon them, helped them to smite their foes, and without its protection they, laymen and sovereigns alike, were doomed to failure<sup>121</sup>. According to the Avesta, Iranian heroes of old achieved their feats through the aid of this Farnah<sup>122</sup>. It was in accordance with this tradition that in the face of peril, Ardašīr-e Pāpakan told his followers:

«If the divine Farnah of Iranian empire (*XVarrab ī ēvānšahr*) comes to our aid, we escape and attain to fortune and ease, I will so act that no one in the world shall be more fortunate than you.»<sup>123</sup>

The Achaemenids held the same idea. In Aeschylus' *Persae* the chief of the Persian Elders prays for the safety of Xerxes and his army who were then in Greece, and places them under the protection of the «ancient Fortune of Iranians (δαίμων παλαιός)»<sup>124</sup>.

<sup>119</sup> *Šahmānah*, Turner Macan ed. (Calcutta 1829) 1374.

<sup>120</sup> As is recognised by many scholars, e.g., J. Bauer, *Symbolik des Parsismus* (Stuttgart 1971) with fig. 67.

<sup>121</sup> Bailey<sup>5</sup> 25 and *passim*.

<sup>122</sup> See especially Yašt XIX, and also Yašt V.

<sup>123</sup> Cited by Bailey<sup>5</sup> 48.

<sup>124</sup> *Persae* 158.

Darius III urges his warriors against Alexander:

«Onward! full of vigour and confidence, to leave to posterity the Glory (*gloriam*) which you received from your ancestors.»<sup>125</sup>

However, Alexander's victories turn the Fortune of Iranian ill<sup>126</sup>, and Darius prays for the restoration of it:

«O Ye gods of my race and kingdom, above all things else grant that I may leave the Fortune of Iranians (τὴν ἱεροῦν Τύχην) re-established in the prosperity wherein I found it.»<sup>127</sup>

These indications establish the high esteem which the Iranians Farnah enjoyed under the Achaemenids. One expects, therefore, to find this Farnah symbolised in Persian iconography in the same way as is the Royal Farnah, discussed above. We should look for instances where ordinary Iranians or their possessions (such as favoured animals)



Fig. 11. Design on a cylinder seal in the Oxus Treasure (British Museum); after Moorey (see n. 2 Fig. 7).

are pictured under the protective shadow of the Iranian Farnah. Not only that, but also should we have cases where the Great King himself, and thence his Royal Farnah, are watched over and guarded by the Fortune of Iranians. The Achaemenid iconography does indeed provide the symbol we are seeking. This is the winged circle which hovers above Iranians of all ranks: hunters, soldiers (Fig. 11), priests (Fig. 8), satraps (Fig. 12) and even the Great Kings. It also floats over favoured animals such as

<sup>125</sup> Quintus Curtius IV 14, 25.

<sup>126</sup> Plutarch, *Alexander* XXX 3-4.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.* XXX 6.

stallions whose equipment reveal Persian ownership. On the cylinder seal discussed earlier (Fig. 2), we have the Royal Farnah (a winged king) guarded by Persian soldiers, and all protected by a winged circle hovering above. In certain sculptural scenes from Persepolis (Taf. 29, 2), such as the »Treasury Reliefs« (Fig. 13), the winged circle appeared in the most important position, namely, above the Great King and his foremost nobles. Even more significantly, a stela from Egypt represents Darius and Xerxes under a winged circle (see above n. 14).



Fig. 12. Coin of the Persian Satrap, Darius; drawn from a picture in Jenkins (see n. 8).

These depictions are in perfect harmony with the position and function of the Iranian Farnah as known from our sources according to which this divinity was the guardian of Iranians and their possessions, and without its help no Iranian, heroes and sovereigns including, could prosper or achieve mighty deeds. In these instances the king is simply counted as one of the Iranians who, like any other individual, needs the protection of the national Farnah. By the same token, the appearance of the symbol over animals is natural enough, for favoured animals were desirable possessions endowed with Farnah. Hence, a rich man was *istōiŝ X'arədnō* »Possessing the Farnah of properties«<sup>128</sup>. The Greater Bundahishn is more explicit on this point, stating that every creature had its own Farnah which every evening returned to the presence of Ahuramazda<sup>129</sup>, i. e., to »the endless light« in the sky. Such a belief could readily furnish the early Iranians who were borrowing the form of this ancient and popular symbol with an »Iranian« interpretation, explaining it as a suitable appearance of the visible form of their own concept of Farnah, and seeing in its wings the means whereby the evening journey through the sky was performed.

<sup>128</sup> Bailey's new intr. xvii, citing Yasna LI, 18.

<sup>129</sup> Cited by Bailey *ibid.* 41.

## VI. Conclusions

The identification of the Achaemenid winged figure as typifying the old Iranian divinity Farnah perfectly meets the prerequisites of the interpretation of the symbol. Firstly, the motif has two main variations: a winged circle and a winged human figure (variation with more wings: Fig. 1-3); the former represents a more general and national concept associated with Iranians as a whole; the latter is distinctly connected with royalty and wears the regalia of the king above whom it hovers; both are benevolent, protective and beautiful, and the kingly one needs the support of the simpler form or that of the Iranian soldiers (Taf. 29, 1, e. g., hovers above guards). All these tally with the position, function and qualifications of the two forms of Farnah: the Iranian Farnah safeguarding all Iranians — sovereigns and heroes including — and the Royal Farnah which while bestower of power and divine grace upon Iranian kings, itself needed protection from evil forces or unlawful rulers intent on destroying the Iranian royalty (see Fig. 11).

Secondly, the royal insignia of the human winged figure was subject to alteration in accordance with changes in kingship, because the Royal Farnah of each sovereign was special to him, and was not associated with other rulers<sup>130</sup>, unless a glorious monarch wished to bestow his Farnah upon a chosen successor<sup>131</sup>.

Thirdly, the symbol has the outstretched wings of a bird of the eagle family, and this agreed with the description of Varəyana, the falcon, »with wings unfolded«, which according to Iranian tradition was the especial bird of Vərəθrayna, the god of the warrior class and a »bestower of Farnah«.

Fourthly, when the human winged figure appears in isolation, it symbolises the Royal Farnah of a particular king and stands on his behalf. Thus, on the western wall of the court of the Palace of Xerxes, the *Hadiš*, in Persepolis (Taf. 29.1), the symbol hovering above the inscription of this king wears the same crown that he wears on the sculptures of that palace, and it is guarded by Iranian soldiers<sup>132</sup>. Similarly, the strongly Hellenized form of the winged human figure on the coin of Tiribazus<sup>133</sup>, the Persian satrap of Lydia (393-92 and 388-80 B. C.) stands as a reference of the Great Persian King's authorisation of the issuing of such a coin exactly as the word

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Yāst V 41 where Frangrasyan prays to the goddess Aredvišura Anahita to grant him the *X'eronah* of the Iranians, but she refuses.

<sup>131</sup> As Frēdūn gave his to Eriš, see above n. 49.

<sup>132</sup> Schmidt, Persepolis I pl. 153 B; AMI N.F. 9, 1976, pl. 20, 1.

<sup>133</sup> See above n. 18; note that the nude bust emerging from the winged circle depicted on the coin wears Greek style pointed beard rather than square-cut long beard which in the East was traditionally reserved for royalty. The nudity once more rules out an association with Ahuramazda in a Persian context, see Herodotus, I, 10 for the abhorrence of the Iranians towards nudity. It is worth noting that while Ahuramazda never appears in Iranian art as a nude figure, the Sasanians did depict Nike, a successor of the Achaemenid winged symbol, nude and that above the head of the King of Kings.

ΒΑΣ [ΙΑΕΩΝ] »Of the King« on the Athenian-type coins of Tribazus' predecessor Tissaphernes<sup>134</sup>, stood to indicate a similar royal sanction.

Fifthly, when the Kingly Fortune of a glorious monarch went to a direct or indirect successor, it retained its original features<sup>135</sup>. Accordingly, when in exceptional cases the crown of a king differs from that of the winged symbol hovering above him, the floating figure represents the Farnah of an illustrious predecessor of that king. Thus the Persis kings who claimed Achaemenid heritage, naturally represented their Farnah in the form of a typically Achaemenid king with »spiked« crown (Fig. 5), as the

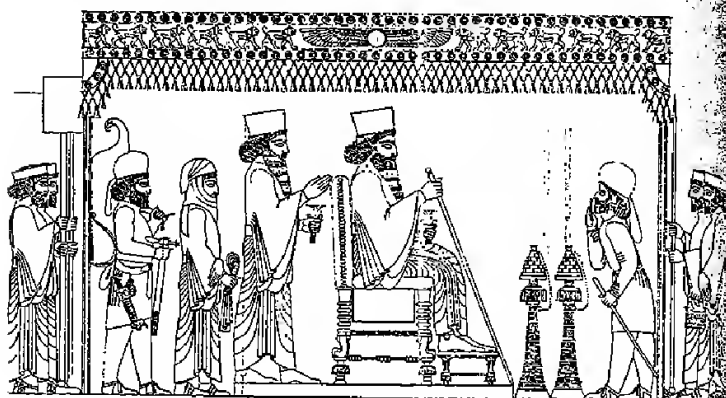


Fig. 13. The Persepolis Treasury relief in its original form; after F. Kretter, *Persepolis Rekonstruktionen* (Berlin 1971) Fig. 16.

knew from depictions on the royal Persian coins and seals. The Sasanians carried the notion one step further: a king who was named after a glorious predecessor, wore an official crown similar to that of the former namesake<sup>136</sup>.

There remains one special case to be considered, namely, the symbol above Darius the Great in the scene sculptured on Behistun (Fig. 14). Here the crenellated crown of the king is markedly different from that of the winged figure; the latter is provided with horns traditionally reserved for gods, and it seems to have been derived from

<sup>134</sup> For the coin see E. S. G. Robinson in *Numismatic Chronicle* 1948 Pl. V 3-8 a; Calmeyer, *Abb.* 3.

<sup>135</sup> See above, n. 46.

<sup>136</sup> »Šāpūr II, for instance, was given the crown of his great predecessor, Šāpūr I. The relationship between the crowns of Ardašīr I and Ardašīr II is similar, and the crown of Kavad II is an obvious imitation of the first crown of Kavad I«, R. Göbl<sup>137</sup> 9.

the crowns of some Urartian lower deities<sup>137</sup>. In the inscriptions accompanying the sculpture, Darius says that he destroyed the Pseudo-Smerdis who had usurped the throne, and restored the Persian kingship to its rightful inheritors, the Achaemenids, whose champion he himself was. Since Darius was not born in purple, he justified his acquisition of the Kingly Fortune through his well-respected royal forebear, the hero and eponymous founder of the Achaemenid House, who in a tradition was said to have been nursed by an eagle<sup>138</sup>. Hence, it is reasonable to identify the eagle-king of the Behistun sculpture as Achaemenes<sup>139</sup>, depicted to symbolise the Kingly Fortune of his inheritor, Darius. Once the power and royalty of Darius was well established, the



Fig. 14. Darius the Great on the rock sculpture of Behistun; after L. W. King — R. C. Thompson. The sculptures and inscriptions of Darius the Great on the rock of Behistun in Persia (London 1907).

need to rely on his royal forebear declined; accordingly, he later showed his Royal Farnah as his own image issuing from a winged circle, as can be seen on his famous British Museum seal and his tomb sculpture. His model was followed by his successors, until the local ruler of Persis once more felt the need to rely on ancestral royalty, and this time they went to Achaemenid repertoire.

Finally, in the Post-Alexander period, a variety of symbols, such as a diademed ram, a winged human (Tyche or Nike) and the Sun (halo and radiated nimbus), gradually replaced the Achaemenid emblems of Farnah. These, however, fall outside the scope of our investigation, and require separate treatments.

<sup>137</sup> Calmeyer, *JdI* 94, 1979, 362 ff. *Abb.* 12.

<sup>138</sup> Above, n. 97; for Achaemenes as a Persian hero see Herodotus III 75; Stephanus Byzantinus, s.v. Ἀχαμανής.

<sup>139</sup> So independently Calmeyer, *op. cit.* 342.

## APPENDIX

## Achaemenid Farnaphoric names

- \*Ahūra.Farnah (Ὁγορένης) »whose Farnah is through Ahura«, a Cappadocian prince, general under Artaxerxes III<sup>140</sup>.
- Arta.Farnah (Ἀρταφέρνης, Aramaic 'rtprn) »whose Farnah is through Arta (god of Righteousness) borne by a brother of Darius the Great<sup>141</sup>, a nephew of the same king<sup>142</sup>, and an official of Xerxes<sup>143</sup>.
- Āriyā.Farnah (Avestan Airyā Xvarenah; Gk. Ἀριοφέρνης) »possessor of the Farnah of Iranians«, a Sarmatian king born c. 350 B.C.<sup>144</sup>; the element-Farnah is Western Iranian instead of the Avestan Xvarenah.
- \*Ātar.Farnah (Ἄταφέρνης for Ἀταφέρνης; Avestan Ātara Xvarenah<sup>145</sup>) »whose Farnah is through Ādur (deity of fire)«, a messenger in the court of Darius the Great<sup>146</sup>.
- Baya.Farnah (Μεγυφέρνης or Μεγυφέρνης), »whose Farnah is through Baya«, a »Persian« commander of Phocia in c. 402 B.C.<sup>147</sup>, and an official of Artaxerxes II<sup>148</sup>.
- Cišra.Farnah (Cissa.Farnah, Gk. Τισσαφέρνης, Σισφέρνης), »possessing glorious race, descent«, borne by a famous satrap of Sardis<sup>149</sup>, and by a friend of Cyrus the Younger<sup>150</sup>; the name was already well-known in Media in the eighth century B.C.<sup>151</sup>.
- \*Dārya.Farnah (Aramaic Dryprn), »Farnah possessing«, an official of Xerxes<sup>152</sup>.
- Drūva.Farnah (Δροφέρνης), »whose Farnah is from Drūva (goddess of cattle)<sup>153</sup>«, a Persian governor of Sardis in 367 B.C.<sup>154</sup>.
- Farnahaspā (Φαρνάσπης), »who obtains Farnah through horses«, an Achaemenid prince, father-in-law of Cyrus the Great<sup>155</sup>.
- Farnah.bāzū (Φαρνάβαζος), »whose strength is through Farnah«, a general of Xerxes, founder of the Pharnacid House, in whose names Farnah appeared regularly<sup>156</sup>.
- Farnah.dāta (Φαρναδάτης<sup>157</sup>), »Farnah created«, a nephew of Xerxes<sup>158</sup>, and a general in the army of the same king<sup>159</sup>.
- Farnah-ka (Φαρνοκῆς or Φαρνοκῆς), »favoured by Farnah«, a popular Iranian name of the Achaemenid period<sup>160</sup>.

<sup>140</sup> Diodorus XXXI 19, 3.

<sup>141</sup> Herodotus V 25; VI 42.

<sup>142</sup> Herodotus VI 94.

<sup>143</sup> R. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* (Chicago 1969) 703 a.

<sup>144</sup> Diodorus XX 22, 4.

<sup>145</sup> M. Mayrhofer, *Onomastica Persepolitana* (Wien 1973) 158.

<sup>146</sup> Hallock, op. cit., No. 1334.

<sup>147</sup> R. A. Bowman, *Aramaic ritual texts from Persepolis* (Chicago 1970) No. 22, 2.

<sup>148</sup> Xenophon, *Anabasis*, I, 2: 20.

<sup>149</sup> For references see F. Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* (Marburg 1895) 164 n. 3.

<sup>150</sup> Plutarch, *Artaxerxes* 13.

<sup>151</sup> Justi, op. cit. 164; G. G. Cameron, *History of Early Iran* (Chicago 1936) 174.

<sup>152</sup> Mayrhofer, op. cit. 148 with references.

<sup>153</sup> Yātr IX; for discussion see L. H. Gray, *The Foundations of the Iranian Religions* (Bombay 1927) 73-5.

<sup>154</sup> L. Robert, »Une nouvelle inscription grecque de Sardis: Règlement de l'autourite perse relatif à un culte de Zeus«, *CRAI* 1975) 306 ff.

<sup>155</sup> Herodotus II 1; III 2.

<sup>156</sup> Justi, op. cit. 92 ff.

<sup>157</sup> Mayrhofer, op. cit. 214.

<sup>158</sup> Diodorus XI 61, 3.

<sup>159</sup> Herodotus VII 67, 79.

<sup>160</sup> Justi, op. cit. 93.

- \*Farnah.zāta (Babylonian Pirina.zata), »born of Farnah«, an official in the time of Darius II<sup>161</sup>.
- Farnah.Xi.θra (Φαρναξιδης), either »possessing his kingdom through Farnah« or »whose Farnah is through Xi.θra Vairiya [the Holy Immortal who symbolized Desirable Dominion]«, a Persian officer in Xerxes' army<sup>162</sup>.
- Humāya.Farnah, »who possesses skill (and happiness) through Farnah«, an official of Darius the Great<sup>163</sup>.
- Hyān.Farnah (Ξανφέρνης<sup>164</sup>), »whose Farnah is well-being«, a friend of Cyrus the Younger<sup>165</sup>.
- Tiri.Faroah (Babylonian Tiri.pirna<sup>166</sup>, Aramaic Tryprn<sup>167</sup>), »whose Farnah is from (the god) Tir<sup>168</sup>«, an Iranian dignitary<sup>169</sup> and the owner of a silver bowl<sup>170</sup>.
- Vīda.Farnah (Ἰνδοφέρνης), »who finds his Farnah<sup>171</sup>«, one of the Seven Persians who overthrew Gaumāta (Pseudo-Smerdis)<sup>172</sup>.

## Persepolis

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<sup>161</sup> A. T. Clay, *Business Documents of Murashu Sons of Nippur Dated in the Reign of Darius II* (Philadelphia 1912), 60 with Gray op. cit. 121.

<sup>162</sup> Herodotus VII 65.

<sup>163</sup> Mayrhofer op. cit. 245 with references.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid. 234.

<sup>165</sup> Plutarch, *Artaxerxes* 11.

<sup>166</sup> Clay op. cit. 65; Gray op. cit. 111-12.

<sup>167</sup> W. B. Henning apud A. D. H. Bivar, *BSOAS* 24, 1961, 191 and Bivar, *JRAS* 1972, 119 n. 3.

<sup>168</sup> On Tir see Gray op. cit. 110 ff.

<sup>169</sup> Clay loc. cit.

<sup>170</sup> Bivar, *BSOAS* 24, 1961, 189 ff.

<sup>171</sup> R. Kent, *Old Persian* (2nd ed. New Haven 1953) 208.

<sup>172</sup> Darius, *Behistun* (Old Persian version) III 48 f.; Herodotus III 70; 78; 118; 119.